Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

LIBRARY RECEIVED
AUG 14 1936
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Monday, August 10, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "CHEESE FACTS FOR LABEL READERS." Information from the Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--oo--

Friends, do you know that there are at least four hundred varieties of cheese? Our correspondent with the Federal Food and Drug Administration, who has been giving us facts about the meaning of statements on labels, which will help us get our money's worth from such staple products as canned salmon and canned shrimp, sardines tea, mayonnaise, and so on -- says she was completely floored whenshe learned that there are four hundred different varieties of cheese.

"Much as I like cheese," she writes, "I was appalled at the task before me -- to send you label information about four hundred cheeses. Why, I would have to dedicate my life to cheese.

"Of course," she continues, "cheese is an important food. Our common American cheese, cheddar, is made of whole milk, and contains most of the protein and fat of milk. Yes, cheese is a nutritious food," states our Washington reporter, "and perhaps I would be justified in devoting my life to it. Perhaps, after I had described each of the four hundred varieties, in detail, someone would erect a monument in my honor, as they did for Madame Marie Harel, who is said to have discovered Camembert cheese.

"The story was told to me by a famous epicure who was in Normandy, France, the day the monument was unveiled in honor of Madame Harel, 'benefactor of all humanity.' It seems that Madame Harel, some 150 years ago, was churning milk in the sleepy village of Vimouters while her husband was out in the fields, plowing. Marie churned away, hoping she'd have some of the usual French cheese ready for her husband when he came in from the fields . . . . Suddenly Marie sniffed the air. There was a new breath of springtime, a tantalizing perfume, an odor that intoxicated, an aroma that hypnotized! She dipped her finger in the churn, tasted the cheese, and shouted some glad words in French. And that's the story of the discovery of Camembert cheese.

"Do the scientists in the Department of Agriculture know this story? I believe not," says our correspondent. "They don't mention Madame Harel in their description of Camembert cheese. They simply state: 'Camembert is said to have originated in 1791 in the locality from which it derives its name in the Department of Orne, in the northwestern part of France.'

"Now, to return to the four hundred varieties. I called on the cheese-label expert in the Food and Drug Administration," continues our Washington friend, "and explained that since there were 400 varieties, and since it was my duty to report label information, I had decided to devote the rest of my life to getting cheese information from him.

"'Couldn't you shorten it somewhat?' he asked hopefully. 'It probably will be shortened,' I told him, 'if I must concentrate on cheese, forever.' 'No no -- the cheese -- not your life,' he explained. 'Shorten the number of varieties. It is

true -- there are four hundred -- perhaps five hundred -- varieties of cheese, but after all, only eighteen distinct varieties.'

"And that statement," says our correspondent, "has saved you, and your radio audience, from years of Monday cheese reports. I'll give you a few facts today -- and more next Monday, about some of the more popular types of cheese.

"First, we must have the Government's definition for cheese: 'Cheese is the product made from curd obtained from the whole, partly skimmed, or skimmed milk of cows, or from the milk of other animals, with or without added cream, by coagulating the casein with rennet, lactic acid, or other suitable enzyme or acid, and without further treatment of the separated curd by heat or pressure, or by means of ripening ferments, special molds, or seasoning.' That's cheese, as defined by the Department of Agriculture.

"Typical examples of whole milk cheese are Cheddar, Limburger, Stilton, Gouda Neufchatel, Roquefort, and Gorgonzola. Examples of cheeses made sometimes from whol milk, and sometimes from partly skimmed milk, are Emmenthaler or Swiss Cheese, Brie, Camembert, and Edam, the round cheese coated with oil and a harmless red coloring matter. A typical cheese made from partly skimmed milk is Parmesan. One of our most common skimmed milk cheeses is Cottage cheese or Schmierkase.

"Cheddar is not the only popular variety of cheese made in the United States. Limburger is made very largely here. So are types of Roquefort, Stilton, and Emmenthaler. Among the common imported cheeses are Emmenthaler from Switzerland, Parmesan and Gorgonzola from Italy, Edam from Holland, and from France -- Roquefort, Camembert and Brie.

"In the United States, the name cheese, unqualified, means Cheddar cheese. And Cheddar is made from heated and pressed curd, obtained from whole cow's milk by the action or rennet. Other names for Cheddar are American cheese, and American cheddar. These cheeses are coated with cloth and paraffin. They have a white or yellow color, a close texture, and a mild or sharp flavor, depending upon ripeness. This cheese, as every good Englishman knows, is named from the village of Cheddar in Somersetshire, England, where it was first made. It is one of the oldest cheeses, and one of the most popular.

"Now, note carefully, if you're a good label-reader, that all original packag of imported cheese must carry a statement on each package of the name of the country of origin. If the 'Camembert' you're serving for dinner tonight came from France, you'll find the word 'France' on the package. The labels on imported cheeses which have been repacked in the United States state the name of the cheese, and usually th word 'imported' is also used.

"If the cheese you're serving is a European variety, but made in America, it will probably be labeled with a qualifying term such as 'American,' or 'Domestic,' o the name of the State in which it was manufactured. Such label information, however. is not considered necessary on certain cheeses, such as Cheddar and Limburger. We make so much Limburger cheese nowadays in the United States, and we make it so well, that the name has come to mean a kind or variety of cheese, and is without geographi significance. As a matter of fact," concludes our correspondent, "we import little if any Limburger nowadays -- that made in New York and Wisconsin has crowded the Belgium variety out of the market."

###